FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF STREET VENDORS IN HPA-AN TOWNSHIP, KAREN STATE, MYANMAR: A PATH ANALYTIC STUDY

Nan She Lar Aye¹

Parvathy Varma²

Abstract: The present study examined the factors that influence the psychological well-being among street vendors in and around the public markets of Hpa-an township, Karen State, Myanmar. A total of 190 female participants who make a living as street vendors in the local markets were obtained by convenience sampling method. The findings of this study revealed that the vendors reported having average levels family functioning, social support, stress, and psychological well-being, used average levels of coping styles. The results showed that the vendors’ social support has direct and positive influence on their psychological well-being. Moreover, the findings yielded direct and positive influences of family functioning, problem-focused coping, and emotion-focused coping on their level of stress. Regardless of having healthy relationships in the family and employing two types of coping strategies, these vendors still reported experiencing certain levels of stress. It is evident that these vendors certainly need professional advice and guidance in order to deal with various stressors in their daily lives.

Keywords: Family Functioning, Social Support, Coping Styles, Stress, Psychological Well-Being, Street Vendors.

Introduction

Street vendors serve an important component of urban economics around the world by the distribution of suitable materials and services with convenience and acceptable prices. Making a living as a street vendor has existed for many years and is recognized as a cornerstone of many cities with historical and cultural heritage (Bromley, 2000). According to the National Commission of Labor, street vendors are identified as self-employed workers in the informal sector who offer their labor for selling goods and services on the street without having any permanent built-up structure (Bhowmik, 2010). Street vendors may be classified into two types: mobile/dynamic (who visit different places during working hours), and immobile/static (who stay at one place and have regular working periods).

There is substantial increase in the number of street vendors in major cities around the world, especially in the developing or underdeveloped countries of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The lack of gainful employment in these countries

¹ M.S. Candidate in Counseling Psychology, Graduate School of Psychology, Assumption University, Thailand. krabbit7@gmail.com
² Ph.D., Lecturer, Graduate School of Psychology, Assumption University, Thailand. parvathyvarma@hotmail.com